

Request to Speak to Committee of Council

Submitted on Thursday, February 4, 2021 - 6:55pm

==Committee Requested==

Committee: General Issues Committee

==Requestor Information==

Name of Individual: Shanice Bowrin

Name of Organization:

Contact Number:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

Reason(s) for delegation request:

My name is Shanice Bowrin and I live in Hamilton, Ontario in Ward 3. As your constituent, I want to express my ongoing frustration concerning the proposed 2.98% increase to the already astronomically high Hamilton police budget, with an existing \$567k surplus.

What?

Hamilton Police Services need to be defunded - denying the proposed of 2.98% increase to the Hamilton Police Services budget and re-allocating the HPS budget surplus into community-led initiatives. The police budget is already astronomically high, with an existing surplus of \$567,000. Money desperately needs to be invested into the community, especially given pandemic conditions and the affordable housing crisis as people are being turned away from shelters and sleeping on the streets.

Police are dangerous and discriminately target Black, Indigenous, and low-income communities.

Hamilton Police Services facilitate encampment teardowns across city in the midst of a global pandemic and affordable housing crisis.

In 2018, Hamilton Police tased 30-year-old Robyn Garlow, an Indigenous woman, and once on the floor, shot her four times. No charges were laid.

In 2018, Hamilton police fatally shot 19-year-old Quinn MacDougall, an Indigenous man, after responding to his distress call to 911. No charges were laid.

In 2003, Chevranna Abdi, a 26-year-old Black transgender woman, was arrested by Hamilton police and dragged down seven flights of stairs face-down, killing her in the process. No charges were laid.

Stats Canada only tracks fatal police shootings if an officer is criminally charged. Increased police presence does not keep us safe. It threatens the lives of our most vulnerable communities (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, the LGBTQ2S+ community, unhoused people, street-based sex workers, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, etc.)

In 2020, intelligence equipment cost \$18,460. The 2021 projected intelligence equipment costs is \$44,460. That is a 140.85% increase in equipment that will be used to surveil and intimidate poor, Black and racialized people in Hamilton

In the operating budget analysis, the Hamilton Police Services will see a 78.3% increase to ammunition expenditures if this budget is approved. The City continues to overfund violence while underfunding sectors and organizations crucial to building healthy and supported communities.

How?

On February 11th, vote against the proposed of 2.98% increase to the Hamilton Police Services budget vote for the proposed return of the HPS budget surplus to the City, and its re-allocation into housing and community-led, harm reduction supports for facing housing, mental health, addiction crisis

Why We Need to Defund Police:

Increased police presence does not keep us safe. It threatens the lives of our most vulnerable communities (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, the LGBTQ2S+ community, unhoused people, street-based sex workers, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, etc.)

Police continue to discriminately target Black and Indigenous communities through tactics of racial profiling, implicit bias, algorithmic bias, etc. In addition to being extremely racist, policing is an ableist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and a classist institution that necessitates these varied oppressions to function.

When police officers do not have the most basic understandings of queer and gender-diverse communities, why is that the 2021 operating budget analysis says that the sexual assault detective constable will make \$108,657, but women's shelters are at capacity and organization like SACHA, who do real work to support survivors are underfunded.

The HPS reports a 14.5% increase in 911 calls involving a person in crisis. People in crisis should not have to resort to police/should not have police called on them and funds should be reallocated towards proper mental health support. Most people killed by police in Canada since 2000 had mental health or substance abuse related issues.

Police reform will not protect community members experiencing mental health distress, address a culture of dismissing sexual assault and missing person inquiries, nor prevent the criminalization of certain identities and need-based acts. Reform is a failed tactic. Reform tactics such as body cameras have had little to no tangible effect on reducing police brutality.

Crime rates in Hamilton, Ontario, and Canada have been declining for the last two decades, with all categories of crime rates in Hamilton dropping during COVID-19. Yet, police budgets continue to inflate. In the operating budget analysis, the Hamilton Police Services will see a 78.3% increase to ammunition expenditures if this budget is approved. The City continues to

overfund violence while underfunding sectors and organizations crucial to building healthy and supported communities.

Investing in our communities addresses the root cause of most criminalized acts, which are often need-based and consequences of poverty. What we really need are robust services that can effectively respond, such as mental health outreach workers, community and housing centres, and accessible educational/prevention programs. We need to:

Decriminalize minor offences.

Reallocate the budget to existing community-led organizations that are offering services to vulnerable communities.

Create effective alternative services such as crisis intervention, mental health centres, and housing.

Pledge Needed:

I am asking you to take meaningful action in response to the senseless police violence against Black and Indigenous communities, community members living with disabilities, unhoused people, and other discriminately targeted communities. I call upon you to:

vote against the proposed of 2.98% increase to the Hamilton Police Services budget

vote for the proposed return of the HPS budget surplus to the City, and its re-allocation into housing and community-led, harm reduction supports for facing housing, mental health, addiction crisis

As your constituent, you represent me. Failure to act upon these proposed demands is a failure to represent a concerned community of your constituents - a community evidenced through these calls.

I am not comfortable continuing to fund policing in my community at the expense of essential services like housing, community health centres, etc.

If you are unable to offer immediate, meaningful action, then I ask that you resign and make way for leadership that is able to do so.

Kind Regards,

Shanice Bowrin

Will you be requesting funds from the City? No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation? No